

236 THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

that strangely charmed Dorian Gray, and he cried out at once, "Lor! t shoot ;l, Geoffrey. Let it live."
 "**What n on^jnse. Dorian!" laughed his companion, and as the hart; bounded into the thicket he fired. There were two cries he^rd, the cry of a hare in pain, which is dreadful, the cry of a man in agony, which is worse.
 "** Good heavens! I have hit a beater 1" exclaimed Sir Geoffrey.
 "**What an ass the man was to get in front of the guns! Stop shooting there!" he called out at the top of his voice. "A man is hurt."
 The head-keeper came running up with a stick in his hand.
 "Where, sir? Where is he?" he shouted. At the same time the firing ceased along the line.
 "Here," answered Sir Geoffrey, angrily, hurrying towards the thicket. "Why on earth don't you keep your men back?"
 Spoiled my shooting for the day."
 Dorian watched them as they plunged into the alder-clump, brushing the lithe, swinging branches aside. In a few moments they emerged, dragging a body after them into the sunlight. He turned away in horror. It seemed to him that misfortune followed wherever he went. He heard Sir Geoffrey ask if the man was really dead, and the affirmative answer of the keeper. The wood seemed to him to have become suddenly alive with faces. There was the trampling of myriad feet, and the low buzz of voices. A great copper-breasted pheasant came beating through the boughs overhead.
 After a few moments, that were to him, in his perturbed state, like endless hours of pain, he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. He started, and looked round, "Dorian," said Lord Henry, "I had better tell them that the shooting is stopped for to-day. It would not look well to go on."
 "I wish it were stopped for ever, Harry," he answered bitterly. "The whole thing is hideous and cruel. Is the man . . .?"
 He could not finish the sentence.
 "I am afraid so," rejoined Lord Henry. " He got the whole charge of shot in his chest. He must have died almost instantaneously. Come; let us go home."
 They walked side by side in the direction of the avenue for nearly fifty yards without speaking. Then Dorian looked at Lord Henry, and said, with a heavy sigh, "It is a bad omen, Harry, a very bad omen."